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The women, as was mentioned above, who desire to have children, for this purpose eat spiders. Some child-bed women, that they may the sooner conceive again, eat the navel-string of the child. There are others who have as great aversion to having children, and procure abortions by different poisonous medicines, in which they are assisted by some knowing old women; but this can never be done, as it is well known, but at the hazard of their own lives. There are others, who are such unnatural wretches as to destroy their children when they are born, or throw them alive to the dogs. They use likewise several herbs and different conjurations to prevent conception. Their superstition, also, is sometimes the occasion of great barbarity; for when a woman bears twins, one of them at least must be destroyed, and so must a child born in very stormy weather; though the last can be averted by some conjurations. After the birth, the women, to recover their strength, make use of fish broth, made with an herb which they call *hale*; and then in a few days return to their ordinary diet.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of their DISEASES *and* REMEDIES.

THE principal diseases in *Kamtschatka* are the scurvy, boils, palsy, cancer, jaundice, and the venereal distemper. These diseases they think are inflicted upon them by the spirits that inhabit some particular groves, if ignorantly they happen to cut any of them down. Their principal medicines consist in charms and conjurations, but at the same time they do not neglect the use of herbs and roots. For the scurvy they use a

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is only the richer ſort of people that uſe this brandy; and what they ſell is only the firſt running, which makes a very good dram.

Two pood of herbs[1] generally render one vedro * of the firſt running, and the pood coſts four rubles or more. The herbs that remain in the ſtill after drawing off all the ſpirit, are made uſe of as a yeſt, inſtead of berries, to ferment other infuſions or wort; and what they cannot uſe thus the cattle eat very greedily, and it fattens them much. It is remarkable that brandy diſtilled from the plants from which the ſkin has not been clean ſcraped, it cauſes melancholy and perturbation of mind. Mr *Steller* made the following remarks upon this brandy: 1ſt, that it is very piercing, and contains a good deal of a ſharp acid, which coagulates the blood and makes it black: 2dly, that a ſmall quantity of it makes people drunk and quite ſenſeleſs, and cauſes their faces to turn black: 3dly, that if a perſon drinks a few drams of it, he is plagued the whole night with diſagreeable dreams, and next day is uneaſy and diſturbed as if terrified with the apprehenſion of the greateſt misfortune: and, what is very extraordinary, he has ſeen ſome people the day after they have been drunk with this ſpirit, from one draught of cold water, become again ſo drunk that they could not ſtand upon their feet. They wet their hair with the juice, which they ſqueeze out of this herb in the ſpring, as a preſervative againſt lice, and find it to be their only relief. Many of the *Kamtſchadales*, who deſire to have children, will not eat this herb, green or dry, imagining that it impairs the generative faculties.

The herb kipri†, which grows in all *Europe* and *Aſia*, has the third place in the food of the *Kamtſchadales*. They boil

* Vedro is a *Ruſſian* liquid meaſure containing 25 pints.

† Epilobium. LINN. Succ. Spec. 1. French willows.

1 [illegible] the sweet herb, Sphondylium foliis pinnatifidis Linn. Cliff.

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roll it about their legs, and it ſerves for ſtockings. The women wrap it round their bodies, from an opinion that the warmth promotes fruitfulneſs. It ſerves to light their fires, being eaſily kindled. On great holidays they bind garlands of it about the heads and necks of their idols; and when they make any ſacrifice, or kill any wild beaſt, they offer ſome of this plant as an atonement, that the relations of the beaſt which is killed may be appeaſed. Formerly they did the ſame by the heads of their enemies: after having adorned them with theſe garlands, they performed ſeveral ſorceries, and then ſtuck them upon poles. The Coſſacks call this plant *tontchitze*.

Few plants are of more general uſe than the nettles; for being without any kind of hemp, they would have no materials to make nets of for fiſhing, which is abſolutely neceſſary for the ſupport of life. They pull them up in the months of *Auguſt* or *September*, and binding them in bunches lay them to dry in the ſhade. When they dreſs them, they firſt ſplit them with their teeth, then peel off the ſkin, and beat them. After this they comb them, then ſpin them between their hands, and wind them up upon ſpindles. The thread of the firſt ſpinning, they uſe for ſewing, but to make their nets they double and twiſt it; which, after all, never laſt above one ſummer. The truth is they are very ignorant and unſkilful in this manufacture; and moreover they neither ſteep their nettles, nor boil their yarn.

1. [plant resembling cyperoides, which is dressed].

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CHAP. XI.

Of INSECTS.

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AS *Kamtſchatka* abounds with lakes and marſhes, the ſwarms of inſects in the ſummer time would make life intolerable there, if it were not for the frequent winds and rains. The maggots are ſo numerous as to occaſion great deſtruction to their proviſions, particularly in the time of preparing their fiſh, which are ſometimes entirely deſtroyed by them. In the months of *June*, *July*, and *Auguſt*, when the weather happens to be fine, the muſketoes and ſmall gnats are very troubleſome; however the inhabitants do not ſuffer much from them, as they are at that time, upon account of the fiſhery, out at ſea, where by reaſon of the cold and wind few of theſe inſects are to be met with.

136 It is but lately that bugs appeared upon the river *Awatſcha*, which were brought thither in cheſts and cloaths: they are not yet known in *Kamtſchatka*. Upon account of the wet weather and ſtorms few of the butterfly kind are found here, except in ſome woods near the upper *Kamtſchatkoi* fort, where they abound. It has been obſerved that numbers of theſe inſects have ſettled upon veſſels which were 30 verſts from the ſhore: it appears ſomewhat extraordinary that they ſhould be able to fly to ſuch a diſtance without reſting; moſt likely the ſtorms ſo frequent here might drive them out to ſea, and by their violence ſupport them.

136 There are few ſpiders in *Kamtſchatka*; ſo that the women
825 who are fond of having children, and who have a notion that
842 theſe inſects ſwallowed render them fruitful and their labour eaſy, have great trouble to find them. Nothing plagues the natives